

ORIGINAL

*16 / "ASH"

REMARKS

By

C. EVERETT KOOP, M.D.

SURGEON GENERAL

U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

AND

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HEALTH

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



PRESENTED TO THE FIRST WORLD CONFERENCE ON

NONSMOKERS' RIGHTS

WASHINGTON, D.C.

OCTOBER 5, 1985

(GREETINGS TO HOSTS, GUESTS, FRIENDS, ETC.)

I WANT TO CONGRATULATE JOHN BANZHAF, THE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF A.S.H., AND ANYONE ELSE WHO HELPED BRING ABOUT THIS FIRST WORLD CONFERENCE ON NONSMOKERS' RIGHTS. TO USE A FAMILIAR BUT NEVERTHELESS ACCURATE PHRASE, THIS IS A CONFERENCE "WHOSE TIME HAS COME."

AFTER NEARLY TWO DECADES OF RESEARCH AND EDUCATION DIRECTED EXCLUSIVELY TO THE PROBLEMS OF SMOKERS, WE ARE NOW BEGINNING TO DEVELOP SCIENTIFIC DATA, LAW, ACTION STRATEGIES, AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS ON BEHALF OF THE NONSMOKING PUBLIC.

WE DON'T KNOW EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT PASSIVE SMOKING OR SIDE-STREAM SMOKING. BUT, FOLLOWING THE ETHICAL IMPERATIVE, WE "KNOW ENOUGH TO ACT." NATURALLY, THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT RESEARCH TO FURTHER DEFINE THE DANGERS OF SMOKING TO THE NONSMOKER.

BUT WE DON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR TOMORROW'S RESEARCH TO KNOW WHAT WE HAVE TO DO TODAY. BUT I FEEL ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENT THAT TOMORROW'S RESEARCH WILL ONLY FURTHER REINFORCE THE PREMISES THAT ARE THE BASIS OF TODAY'S ACTION ON BEHALF OF NONSMOKERS.

BUT THAT'S AN APPROPRIATE WAY TO PROCEED, WHEN YOU COME TO THINK OF IT. THAT'S HOW THIS WHOLE ANTI-SMOKING CAMPAIGN BEGAN OVER 20 YEARS AGO, WHEN DR. LUTHER LEONIDAS TERRY, THEN SURGEON GENERAL OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, DECIDED THAT HE KNEW ENOUGH ABOUT THE HEALTH HAZARDS OF SMOKING TO TAKE THE INFORMATION TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND BEGIN TO FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT AGAINST CIGARETTES.

AND THAT'S BEEN THE MODUS OPERANDI, YOU MIGHT SAY, OF EVERY SURGEON GENERAL OF THE PAST 21 YEARS.

CURRENTLY, I AM PROUD TO SAY, THE SURGEON GENERAL IS C. EVERETT KOOP. BUT BEFORE I CAME ALONG, THREE OTHER PHYSICIANS -- JULIUS RICHMOND, JESSE STEINFELD, AND WILLIAM STEWART -- WERE EQUALLY DEDICATED SURGEONS GENERAL WHO EXPANDED THE INFORMATION BASE, WHO ADMITTED THAT WE NEEDED TO KNOW MORE, BUT WHO NEVER RETREATED FROM THE FIELD OF BATTLE FOR THAT REASON. WE'VE ALWAYS KNOWN ENOUGH -- MORE THAN ENOUGH -- TO ACT ON BEHALF OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

THE FOUR OF US, HOWEVER, HAVE HAD TO MEASURE UP TO A MODEL SET BY DR. TERRY, A PHYSICIAN WHO REPRESENTS EXCELLENCE IN MEDICINE AND IN PUBLIC SERVICE. HE HAD THE KIND OF COURAGE IT TAKES TO BEGIN SUCH A FIGHT AS THIS.

DR. TERRY DIED ON MARCH 29 OF THIS YEAR. I'M DEEPLY GRATEFUL THAT YOU HONOR HIM BY DEDICATING THIS FIRST WORLD CONFERENCE TO HIS MEMORY. HE WAS A GENUINE HERO OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH AND HE LIES IN A HERO'S GRAVE IN ARLINGTON CEMETERY.

LUTHER TERRY WENT FOR THE BIG ONE. HE ATTACKED A HEALTH PROBLEM THAT AFFECTS HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, IN OUR COUNTRY AND AROUND THE WORLD...SMOKERS AND NONSMOKERS ALIKE.

HE ATTACKED ONE OF THE MAJOR POWER CENTERS OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS: THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY. AND THE INDUSTRY HAS NEVER FORGIVEN HIM, NOR HIS SUCCESSORS EITHER. BUT I MUST TELL YOU THAT ITS ENMITY IS A BADGE WE HAVE ALL WORN WITH MUCH HONOR.

LUTHER TERRY WAS A MODEST MAN. HE ALWAYS SAID HE HAD HELPED TO START SOMETHING. HE NEVER CLAIMED TO HAVE DONE IT ALL. HE LEFT PLENTY OF ROOM FOR THE REST OF US TO MAKE OUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ELIMINATION OF CIGARETTES.

BUT I THINK SOMETHING ELSE IS GOING ON HERE AS WELL. WHAT YOU ARE DOING HERE TODAY AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO, I WOULD HOPE, IN THE DAYS FOLLOWING THIS CONFERENCE, IS TO CLAIM OWNERSHIP OF THIS HEALTH ISSUE IN THE NAME OF THE NONSMOKING MAJORITY.

AND MAYBE IT'S ABOUT TIME THAT SOCIETY DID JUST THAT. MAYBE THE TIME HAS INDEED ARRIVED WHEN WE CAN SAY THAT THIS ISSUE IS NO LONGER THE EXCLUSIVE ISSUE OF BIOMEDICAL RESEARCHERS AND EPIDEMIOLOGISTS AND BEHAVIOR MODIFIERS, BECAUSE IT ISN'T.

IT'S AN ISSUE FOR HUSBANDS AND WIVES, FOR WORKERS, FOR CHILDREN, FOR THE ELDERLY, FOR MANY MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WHO DO NOT SMOKE AND WHO HAVE A RIGHT TO A SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT.

THIS IS THEIR ISSUE. AND THIS EVENING, AS YOU LEAVE THE LAST PLENARY SESSION AND PREPARE TO RETURN TO YOUR HOME COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS, I HOPE YOU WILL GO ARMED WITH A DEEPER APPRECIATION OF THE BROAD, COMMON OWNERSHIP OF THIS ISSUE THAT MUST BE SHARED AMONG ALL NONSMOKERS:

- * YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A SPECIALIST IN PULMONARY MEDICINE TO CONVINCE SUPERMARKETS AND CONVENIENCE FOOD STORES TO BAN SMOKING FROM THEIR PREMISES. AND WE KNOW THEY SHOULD.
- * YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN EXPERT BIOSTATISTICIAN TO HELP LOCAL LAWMAKERS PASS THE KIND OF ORDINANCES THAT WILL GIVE US A SMOKE-FREE COMMUNITY. AND WE KNOW THEY CAN.
- * AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE CONSULTANT IN CLINICAL CHEMISTRY TO REALIZE THAT NONSMOKERS NEED TO COME TOGETHER, TO ORGANIZE AND POOL THEIR ENERGIES AND RESOURCES, IN ORDER TO REGAIN CONTROL OF -- AND SCRUB UP -- THE ENVIRONMENT.

- * AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE THE SURGEON GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES TO SIT DOWN WITH A LOCAL NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL WRITER OR A T.V. NEWS PRODUCER TO TALK ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF NONSMOKERS TO WORK, PLAY, EAT, TRAVEL, AND STUDY IN A SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT. IN FACT, YOU'RE PROBABLY BETTER OFF NOT BEING THE SURGEON GENERAL.

I'M GOING TO STOP HERE, BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO BE ACCUSED OF "PREACHING TO THE COMMITTED." INSTEAD, FOR THE NEXT FEW MINUTES, AND WITH THE HELP OF YOUR CHAIRMAN, JOHN BANZHAF, I'D BE PLEASED TO TRY TO ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS ON NONSMOKERS' RIGHTS THAT MAY BE ON YOUR MINDS.

THERE'S AN OLD JEWISH PROVERB THAT SAYS, "WHEN A POOR MAN EATS A CHICKEN, ONE OF THEM IS SICK." I'LL PARAPHRASE THAT AND SAY, "WHEN A PERSON ASKS THE SURGEON GENERAL A QUESTION, ONE OF THEM LEARNS SOMETHING NEW."

THANK YOU.

#